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THE  
ANTI-SLAVERY REPORTER.

No. 75.]      FEBRUARY 1, 1831.      [Vol. iv. No. 3.

I.—REMARKS ON THE RIGHT HON. R. W. HORTON'S SECOND LETTER TO THE  
FREEMOLDERS OF YORKSHIRE, ON COMPULSORY MANUMISSION, &c.

II.—THE QUESTION OF COMPENSATION CALMLY CONSIDERED.

I.—MR. WILMOT HORTON ON COMPULSORY MANUMISSION.

A SECOND letter from the pen of Mr. Wilmot Horton to the freeholders of Yorkshire, has made its appearance. There is appended a brief postscript, in which he promises to take "the earliest opportunity of correcting the misrepresentations" contained in our 72nd number, and threatens, with somewhat less than his usual measure of courteousness, "to demonstrate the falsity, absurdity and bad faith" of our charge against him as "the uniform apologist of negro slavery, and the abettor and champion of every colonial abuse." Now, in the irritation of the moment, Mr. Horton has mistaken for a charge against him, our statement of the fact that circumstances had produced, justly or not, in the public mind, an impression that he was hostile to negro freedom. If he denies this fact, we are at issue with him upon it. We did not assert, not being able to dive into his thoughts, that he was really hostile to Negro freedom. But we did say, and we say again, that the part he has taken on this question in public has obtained for him that reputation, and we must fairly think not very unreasonably. Waiting without dismay the proof he has promised of the *falsity* and *bad faith*, as well as the absurdity of this opinion, we shall now confine our attention to Mr. Horton's second letter, in which, taking as before Major Moody, formerly employed for years in coercing about a thousand slaves, for his grand and decisive authority on the subject of free and slave labour, he proceeds to arraign the abolition party as guilty of a dereliction of their duty in not having come forward to take a part in the inquiry which he thought proper to institute, before the Privy Council, in November, 1827, on that subject, as connected with the compulsory manumission clause, which had been introduced into the Berbicé Order in Council. He expresses too, not only very great astonishment at this conduct, but his utter ignorance of the reasons which could have influenced it. He must here however, allow us to marvel in our turn at such a statement, while we adduce it as a further illustration of the characteristic propensity of this gentleman to employ himself in combating shadows of his own creation.

As early as the month of December, 1827, immediately on the close of the Inquiry, in the Reporter numbered 31, we took occasion briefly to explain some of the reasons which appeared to us to have produced that determination; on not one of which, though he must have read the article in question, has he condescended to bestow the slightest notice. For his sake therefore, as well as for the sake of those to whom his letter is addressed, we will now transcribe the passage.

After a brief review of the effect of the evidence adduced before the Privy Council on that occasion, we thus proceed.

“Before we conclude this article, it may be expected that we should make some allusion to a circumstance which occurred in the course of the inquiry before the Privy Council, and which has been represented as indicating a backwardness on the part of the abolitionists to support, by evidence, the views they have promulgated on the subject of manumission and free labour. On the day on which the evidence for the petitioners was brought to a close, the newspapers represented a member of the Council” (who in fact was no other than Mr. W. Horton himself) “as complaining that no one came forward with counter evidence. This complaint was supposed to point to Mr. Buxton and his friends; and not a few were disposed to infer, from their having declined the challenge, that they must have done so under a conviction of the weakness of their cause. What Mr. Buxton and his friends may think it right hereafter to say from their places in Parliament, in defence of the line they took on this occasion, we pretend not to anticipate; but we can conceive many sound reasons which might have induced them to refuse the call said to have been addressed to them. Mr. Buxton and his friends, it is well known, had from the first declined to sanction the proposed inquiry by taking any part in it. If, however, such a determination had been deliberately and avowedly adopted by them, before the inquiry commenced, it would have argued no very consistent or well-formed purpose had they been provoked, by any such call, to swerve from it; particularly after the inquiry had almost reached its termination, and when not the slightest preparation had been made to fulfil the task said to have been thus proposed to them. We can easily imagine, however, what may have been some of their reasons both for not complying with any such call, and for their original determination to take no part in the inquiry.

“1. They might have supposed, that the object, from first to last, which such an inquiry was intended by the petitioners and their supporters to promote, was DELAY; and they might have felt it to have been their duty to lend no aid, directly or indirectly, to such an object.

“2. They might have conceived, that they had already established their case to the satisfaction (to say nothing of the public) of both the Parliament and the Government of the country; both having, after due deliberation and inquiry, so far assented to its truth and justice, as to resolve, with an unanimity scarcely broken by a murmur on the part of the West Indians in parliament, to adopt forthwith a variety of the reforms suggested by Mr. Buxton and his friends, and among the rest the very measure which was the subject of inquiry.

“3. With respect also to the measure at issue, they might have pro-

duced, as a valid reason for considering it as a settled point, that His Majesty's government, through the organs of Mr. Canning and Lord Bathurst, had repeatedly declared it to be "a vital part of their whole scheme," which "could not be dispensed with," and without which "no system of measures would satisfy the feelings of the country, or execute the purposes of Parliament;" and that therefore to submit it at this late hour to a new inquiry, would hardly be doing justice to the memory of one distinguished statesman, or to the feelings of another; and still less to their own obligations as men intrusted with the conduct of a great cause.

"4. They might further have pleaded their fears, that if they should consent to become parties to such an inquiry, they might be virtually surrendering the pledges already obtained; at least they might be contributing indefinitely to protract their fulfilment, seeming bound in consistency to wait the result of the inquiry, to which they had consented, before they agitated the subject in Parliament.

"5. They might also have been of opinion, that having obtained certain concessions in favour of the slave population, they had no right to compromise the vital interests of that numerous class, by agreeing to any proceeding which brought into question, and eventually might endanger, its full right to each and all of those concessions.

"6. And supposing there were no validity in these several reasons, they might still have been of opinion, that to institute a grave and solemn inquiry before the King in Council, in order to ascertain what would be an equitable compensation to a slave-holder for the redemption of his slave (which was in fact the professed and precise object of the inquiry), was a course wholly uncalled for; the question, though a very fit question to be settled by a court and jury, or by three honest and impartial appraisers, after a due investigation of the special facts of each case, being scarcely fit to exercise the legislative functions either of the Privy Council or of Parliament.

"7. Besides this, they might have thought that, the point more immediately at issue being one, not of fact, but of speculation, to proceed to settle it by *evidence upon oath* seemed an anomalous and questionable proceeding, by which, in certain supposable cases, under the sanction of that solemnity, a more ready currency might be given to the effusions of party spirit, passion, prejudice, or selfishness.

"8. The question at issue also, being one of a speculative kind, they might have thought, was more likely to be satisfactorily decided by a reference to general principles; to official documents exhibiting plain and unsophisticated facts; and to the results of historical experience; than by a reference to the necessarily contracted and partial observations of prejudiced and interested individuals.

"9. They might moreover have thought, that in a case where the petitioners stood opposed to the concurrent wishes, and to the declared purposes of the Government and the Parliament, as well as of the nation, the whole burden of proof lay upon them; but that being a case which it was impossible to establish by evidence, the attempt to produce counter evidence would be like fighting with a shadow.

"10. Mr. Buxton and his friends might further have pleaded, that the

whole of the statements which they had to produce had been already placed before the public, and were chiefly drawn from official documents, which had either been laid by the Colonial Department on the table of Parliament, or were to be obtained through that department.\*

"11. They might also have seen grounds, from the first, for believing that the petitioners would not only fail in establishing their own case, but would, by their statements, give additional confirmation to the case of their opponents; and that therefore to meet them by counter evidence, was altogether a work of supererogation.

"12. And if there were any good grounds for such an anticipation before the inquiry commenced, they must have been abundantly confirmed in that opinion before the period of the alleged challenge; as by that time the failure of the petitioners' case had become matter of history; and every previous hope, that those views of the subject entertained by Mr. Buxton and his friends, would be strengthened, had been surpassed by the event, as the preceding pages sufficiently shew."†

Now the above statements, we think, might have satisfied even Mr. Horton, as we are persuaded they will satisfy the Yorkshire freeholders, and every dispassionate and unprejudiced reader, that there were not wanting plausible reasons at least for the course pursued by the abolitionists.

When Mr. Horton's letter of the 25th September, 1827, however, first reached Mr. Buxton, announcing to him the intention of Government to hear evidence before the Privy Council, on the petition of the Berbice planters, against the compulsory manumission clause, it contained no call upon the abolitionists to come forward, either as parties or as witnesses, but merely intimated that Mr. Huskisson "supposed it not improbable that Mr. Buxton might wish to attend on that occasion." And if so "I should be happy," said Mr. Horton, "to apprise you in time, or any friends of yours whom you may name, of the period fixed for the examination." This letter, we repeat, contained no invitation to Mr. Buxton or his friends to be either parties or witnesses in this inquiry; still it was supposed that such an inference might be drawn from it. Pains were, therefore, taken to ascertain the precise purpose of the Government in sending this notice to Mr. Buxton. Accordingly Mr. W. Smith applied to Lord Goderich, and to Mr. Horton on the subject. The result of his conference with the latter is thus recorded by Mr. Horton himself, in a letter addressed to Mr. W. Smith, and dated Downing Street, October 22, 1827, to the following effect:—

"Dear Sir,

"I am anxious to record in writing the substance of the conversation which I had the pleasure of having with you on Friday last.

"I then told you, that I had learnt with considerable surprise, that the information which I gave to Mr. Buxton was construed as an invitation to the abolitionists (if, for the sake of convenience, one may be permitted to use the phrase) to appear as parties on the proposed

\* See especially the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, No. 27, which contained a full examination of the whole question.

† Referring to an analysis of that evidence in the same *Reporter*, No. 31.

inquiry before the Privy Council. I beg to assure you that *nothing could have been farther from the intention of Mr. Huskisson than such an invitation.* The object of my informing Mr. Buxton was, to give himself, or any other person equally interested with him on the subject, an opportunity of making their arrangements, *so as to attend as auditors, if they chose to do so, at the hearing before the Privy Council.* Indeed, *I am not aware by what process Mr. Buxton or his friends could come in technically as parties.* I have heard it said, that they might petition as '*prochains amis*;' I presume to offer no opinion in point of law as to the capability of so presenting themselves. But it is not immaterial to consider the circumstances upon which this inquiry before the Privy Council is founded.

"As I have already told Mr. Buxton, the Berbice petitioners, in substance, contend that the equitable interests of private property (the preservation of which the Resolutions of the House of Commons distinctly contemplated) have not been sufficiently attended to by the Government, in the measures which they in pursuance of those resolutions have adopted. The Government undoubtedly might have met such an allegation by refusing all appeal to the Privy Council, and by informing the parties that they intended rigidly to abide by what they had done, without consenting to any inquiry on the subject.

"They have, however, decided to take another course; namely, to sanction an examination into the specific charge of neglect of the equitable interests of private property, as contended by the Berbice petitioners, to be involved in the compulsory manumission clauses.—The result of that examination may, on the one hand, be either to prove that the objections of those petitioners are unfounded, in which case there would be no doubt as to the course which would be to be taken; or, on the other hand, to shew that, without impairing the purpose of the Legislature, as declared in the resolutions of 1823, other regulations may more satisfactorily accomplish that object.

"The Privy Council will be summoned for Wednesday the 7th November."

Now it will be for Mr. Wilmot Horton to reconcile this official letter, which appears to shut out the abolitionists from all title to appear as parties or even as witnesses, and inviting them merely *as auditors*, with the tone of his present letter to the freeholders of Yorkshire. That he afterwards invited them to take a part is true, but it was in the very midst, nay almost at the close of the inquiry; and that he then used even taunts to induce them to do so, we admit. But it was then obviously too late even to collect the opinions of friends scattered in different parts of the country, as to the expediency of a compliance, and still more to prepare a case on so sudden and unexpected a call.

In point of fact, however, no sooner had Mr. Horton's letter of the 25th September, 1827, reached Mr. Buxton than he took measures to ascertain, by conference or correspondence with his friends, their view of the expediency of becoming parties to the inquiry, supposing that to be the purpose or the desire of the Government; and their unanimous decision, even before Mr. Horton's letter of the 22nd October was laid before them, was in the negative. The following communica-

tions to Mr. Buxton will shew the general current of opinion among those friends whom he consulted.

"Assuming," says one of them in a letter dated 12th October, 1827, "that it is the wish of the Government that Mr. Buxton and his friends should be parties to the proposed inquiry, I would advise him by all means to decline it.

"It is true that the original motion which gave occasion to the debate of May, 1823, was submitted to the House of Commons by Mr. Buxton. That motion the Government thought proper to oppose. An amendment was moved by a minister of the crown in the name of the cabinet. That amendment was carried; and the administration remained pledged to adopt measures tending to a reform of the West India system.

"If the ministers have not fulfilled their promise, they have at least reaped the whole advantage of it. They have quieted the public mind by repeatedly declaring that they had undertaken the whole work of amelioration. In Parliament they have repeatedly silenced Mr. Buxton and his friends, by complaining that a question which now belonged to themselves was attempted to be taken out of their hands. The measures which they have pressed on the Colonists were measures concerted by themselves alone. If they took counsel, it was not with Mr. Buxton and his friends, but with the most distinguished members of the West India party.

"These measures however have been opposed by the West Indians; and now it is to the very persons for whose motion they substituted their own amendment, and out of whose keeping they have taken the question, and to whose interference they have so often objected, that, as is now assumed, *they apply to defend* a policy for which they alone are responsible.

"In form, as in substance, the proposition of the Government is most exceptionable. The appearance of Mr. Buxton before the Privy Council, would be a violation of every principle which regulates the proceedings of deliberative or judicial bodies; an irregularity of which the Colonists would have to complain, and which the writers who favour them would know how to account. Clothed with no recognized character, pretending to no personal interest, he is called upon to appear as the representative (it is presumed) of a political and religious party; or as the advocate of abstract principles. This would really be a burlesque on the solemnities of such a tribunal.

"The duty of defending the proceedings of the Government belongs to the Government itself. If any other party be entitled to interfere, that party is the agent for Berbice; who, as intrusted with the interests of *all classes* of British subjects in that settlement, may, without impropriety, demand to be heard in favour of the largest and most unprotected portion of the population.

"If, indeed, the ministers are desirous to retract the pledge which they gave in May 1823, their conduct admits of an easy explanation. By the course now proposed, they extricate themselves from the situation in which their own policy has placed them, and substitute Mr. Buxton and his friends in their room. After having so long declared



that the question of Negro Slavery was in their own hands, they restore it to him with whom it originated, but in a state widely different from that in which they received it, encumbered by difficulties and narrowed by limitations which never would have existed had it remained in their custody.

“Should Mr. Buxton comply with the wish of the Government, it will be out of his power to bring forward any legislative measure tending to accelerate the emancipation of slaves in any of our Colonies. He will be met, and justly met, by the observation, that, having himself agreed to debate the question and to examine evidence upon it before the Council, he ought to await the decision of that body. Years may elapse before that decision is announced, a delay which, however agreeable in prospect to a Government desirous only to shift off, by daily expedients, the necessity of acting, no person who justly feels the magnitude of the subject can contemplate without pain.

“If the ministers are desirous to retract their engagement, be it so. Professed neutrality or open hostility is preferable to secret enmity. Mr. Buxton and his friends are prepared to fight the battle, but it must be on ground selected by themselves, not assigned by others. It must be before the Parliament and the Country. It must be, not on those principles which the Government has adopted, but on those which are entertained by themselves, and which, they are firmly convinced, will, when boldly stated, receive enthusiastic support from the body of the people.”

A second communication, bearing the same date, contains the following observations:—

“I am persuaded that Mr. W. Horton is the grand mover in the affair of hearing evidence in support of the Berbice and Demerara Planters’ Memorial (on this point indeed Lord Goderich, in what passed between him and Mr. W. Smith, seems to remove all doubt); and having given them leave to bring such evidence forward, he seems now embarrassed as to the mode of proceeding, and his letter to Mr. Buxton seems intended to relieve him from this embarrassment. Government could not possibly allow the planters to walk over the course, and to say what they pleased, against a measure of their own, without contradiction. This would be to stultify themselves before the public, and would doubtless also be considered as a betraying of that cause of reform which they had voluntarily undertaken, when they forced Mr. Buxton to resign it to them; as well as a violation of their pledges to carry that reform into effect. Indeed it seems so obviously the duty of Government to employ their own law officers in meeting the statements of the objectors, sifting their evidence, and rebutting their arguments, that it will require some ingenuity to account for that course not being taken. The Government are the sole depositories of the reasons which induced them to pursue certain measures, and they alone therefore are competent to defend those measures; and to instruct their own legal advisers for that purpose. It is for them to defend what they have done. The responsibility of the measures that have been adopted is entirely theirs, and with them alone therefore ought to rest the defence.

" I am aware that this is an embarrassing position for a man like Mr. W. Horton, who has had himself so large a share in the concoction and conduct of those measures, and I do not wonder he should shrink from it, and wish to shift the *onus* on others, as well as to throw on them the eventual discredit of a weak and inadequate defence; especially as he must be aware that in every step that is taken, and in every word that is uttered, the proceedings will be closely watched by the abolitionists.

" Now we cannot wonder that he should wish to escape from such a dilemma, and that with that view he should be desirous of transferring to others all the trouble and responsibility of the contest, while he and his coadjutors remain as calm spectators and umpires between the conflicting parties.

" In 1823, the abolitionists came forward and were willing fairly to encounter their opponents in the pursuit of their own views. Government, however, authoritatively interfered, and took the matter out of the hands of the contending parties, and gave certain pledges of practical measures which they were to accomplish, promising that if they should be prevented by the contumacy of the colonists from accomplishing them, they would then come to Parliament for aid and counsel.

" Now that the total inefficiency of the reiterated recommendations of the Government to the Colonial Assemblies can no longer be denied, and that the time therefore is indubitably come when this pledge ought to be redeemed, it is proposed to pursue the timid course of inducing Mr. Buxton and his friends in fact to absolve the Government from the fulfilment of their pledges, and to engage in the contest anew, and that on far lower and more disadvantageous ground than we occupied when displaced from it by the interference and the solemn engagements of the Government.

" We are to be admitted as parties against the colonists, not upon our own original grounds, but on the grounds on which the Government have chosen to take their stand, and from much of which the abolitionists have dissented, both in principle and in detail.

" It is impossible therefore not to feel it to be a most extraordinary course for the Government to pursue, that after having almost forcibly taken the affair out of our hands; after having uniformly complained of the very slightest interference on our parts in Parliament; after having rejected our views and adopted in their stead those of the colonial club; after having never once deigned to make us parties to their deliberations, they should now expect that we should volunteer to fight their battle; that we should undertake the defence of their very defective measures; and that we should generously expose ourselves to the whole ire of the West Indians for their rescue; and that, armed with their weapons, and not with our own. There is something really ludicrous in all this. The authors of the mischief, wrapping themselves up in the character of indifferent umpires, are to enlist us in the defence and justification, before the king and country, of all their bad measures, and to set themselves free, by this very proceeding, from our claims upon them.

" They are aware of the total contrariety of our views and principles

to theirs, in making the planters the agents of reform, and that we have always protested against all measures which proceed upon the plan of placing the legal condition of the slave at the mercy of his oppressor. And yet they would have us to become the advocates of measures which adopt confidence in the planters as their basis, and respecting neither the foundation nor framework of which we have ever once been consulted, and much of which also we disapprove.

"Indeed we strongly protest against the plan of hearing evidence at all, in a case already decided by the King in council, and sanctioned by both houses of Parliament, like that of compulsory manumission. If Government were not convinced of the soundness and expediency of the measure, they ought not to have adopted and enforced it. And the responsibility of now abandoning it, or of instituting an enquiry which may suspend for years the progress of improvement among 800,000 of his Majesty's subjects, and of which the only result can be delay, must rest with them."

We produce these communications, not for the purpose of justifying the ground the writers of them took in considering the subject, nor of defending the correctness of their language and sentiments, but merely to shew that the subject was deliberately considered, and that the determination to abstain from all interference in the enquiry had at least some shew of reason in its favour. The determination, however, whether right or wrong, was rendered wholly superfluous by the letter of Mr. Wilmot Horton to Mr. W. Smith, in which he absolutely disclaims all such intention as had been ignorantly imputed to him by Mr. Buxton's friends, and officially shuts out both him and them from all concern in the matter, except as auditors.

What then, under these circumstances, must have been the surprise of Mr. Buxton and his friends, when towards the close of the examination, namely, on the 23d of November, Mr. Horton addressed to Mr. Buxton, then at Cromer, the letter he has inserted in the pamphlet we are now reviewing (p. 21), calling upon him to come forward and take part before the Privy Council; thus in fact seeming to realize all the surmises which, in his letter to Mr. Smith, he had so formally disclaimed.

About the same time he also wrote, as he states, to Mr. Macaulay, strongly urging him to come forward, and to place on record his opinions on the subject, pressing upon him as a motive for *swearing* to their truth, the Christian obligation he was under of 'doing as he would be done by.' (p. 23.) Mr. Macaulay, he adds, *did not choose* to accept the proposal; and he goes on to express his *astonishment* at the refusal, leaving it to be inferred that no reasons had been assigned to him for this conduct. But as Mr. Macaulay did assign his reasons, Mr. Horton ought in fairness to have stated them.

Some days before, in a private conversation, Mr. Horton had challenged Mr. Macaulay to shew that, commercially speaking, the market price of a slave was his fair and proper value. Mr. Macaulay accepted the challenge, and transmitted to Mr. Horton a paper on the subject, the substance of which afterwards appeared in the Anti-Slavery Re-

porter, vol. n. No. 33, p. 182. It was in a letter acknowledging this communication, (in which letter Mr. Horton stated that he had discovered "an overwhelming fallacy" in Mr. M.'s argument,) that Mr. Horton first proposed (notwithstanding what he said to Mr. Smith on the 22d of October,) that Mr. Macaulay should come forward and take a part in the inquiry. Mr. Macaulay's reply, dated the 28th of November, 1827, was to this effect:—

"Knowing the different views which may be taken in all matters of mere speculation, I cannot wonder that you should dissent from the paper on the subject of the equitable compensation to be made to the master on the compulsory manumission of his slave. Though I have not yet discovered in it the 'overwhelming fallacy' which you have detected, yet I certainly am not disposed vehemently to contend for its soundness; and still less should I be disposed, correct though I believe my views to be, to maintain them on oath.

"This, however, forms by no means my only objection to the proceeding in which you invite me to take a part. A petition has been presented by the planters of Berbice against a clause in the Order of Council for that colony, on the subject of compulsory manumission. Now to that clause I myself most decidedly object, as outraging both common sense and common justice, both in its principle and its details. For even if its details were less objectionable than they are, and it were framed on the exact model of the Trinidad, or even of the Spanish law, though I should certainly accept it with gratitude as a great improvement on the existing state of things, I nevertheless could not undertake to plead for it, or to bear testimony in its favour, as consistent with justice, or as reconcileable to that divine precept to which you refer as requiring my appearance before the Privy Council—'Do as you would be done by.'

"In a conversation with which you lately honoured me, you did not hesitate to admit that colonial slavery was '*a crime of a deep dye.*' Now it is to this point that I am disposed in the first instance to apply the above precept. And I think it will not be denied that it is not doing as we would be done by to require that the party suffering from that crime should indemnify the criminal (let that criminal be either the planter or the British nation, or both,) for all the present and prospective benefits which he may shew himself to be deriving, or to be likely to derive from his crime, before that crime shall cease;—that the suffering slave should not only yield day by day, to the man who holds him in slavery, his coerced and uncompensated toil, but should be driven, as his only and almost hopeless means of deliverance from this state, to employ the minute and scattered and scanty fragments of his broken repose to make up to the master the price of his liberty. I cannot believe this to be just, and I should deem myself to be not doing as I would be done by, if I came forward in support of such a system.

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\* Mr. Horton has not yet condescended to point out this overwhelming fallacy.

"Independently, however, of this more general view of the subject, I am so convinced that the Berbice law will not only produce no practical benefit to the slave, but actually deteriorate his prospects, that I should think myself doing wrong were I to appear to take part with it for one moment.

"I also object to the whole enquiry, as giving an undue importance to this particular part of the case. While evils without number and of frightful magnitude are admitted, by the very acts of the Government and Parliament, to exist in our colonies, and to require a prompt and effectual remedy, it does not seem right that those evils should remain, for years subsequent to the admission, unredressed, while we have no question really at issue except that of fixing the fractional parts of the compensation which may become owing to the planter, in the rare event of some field slave being able, some ten years hence, to redeem himself from slavery. We thus seem to be losing sight of all the great moral and political questions involved in the subject, amid a cloud of metaphysical subtleties and abstractions.

"I should think it as reasonable in a London merchant to enter into a laborious discussion on the nature and value of a paper currency before he paid his acceptances, as for this great Christian nation to be deliberating for years on the "incommensurable nature" of the moral and physical qualities of a set of its injured and oppressed subjects, before it extends to them that relief which, by every law divine and human, it is bound to extend to them.

"We do not so act in other matters. The general principle of compensation is also a practice perfectly well understood. The particular application of that principle belongs not to Government or to Parliament, but is the proper province of the jury, or of the appraisers called to examine and decide fairly on all the peculiarities of each special case.

"There are other reasons which lead me to decline to come forward to argue such a question *on oath*. I am perfectly ready at the same time to furnish the fullest information in my power to his Majesty's Government on this subject; and no labour or time or thought which I can bestow upon it will be wanting, should I be called upon for that purpose.

"As you expressed a wish that I would suggest to you any evidence which might throw light on this subject, I beg to say that it has occurred to me that it would form a most useful supplement to the testimony already adduced, if you were to call for an exact transcript, from the registry books under Mr. Amyott's care, of the entries made there by the sugar planters of Demerara and Berbice since the year 1817. Truth, you may rely upon it, would, by this process, be far more effectually elucidated than by examining a thousand speculative witnesses.

"I would also suggest as an useful supplement to Major Moody's testimony on the "affinities and sympathies" existing between master and slave, and growing stronger from day to day, to which so much of the slave's "incommensurable value" is to be attributed, that a list should

be obtained exhibiting the names of the resident, and the non-resident, sugar planters of Demerara and Barbice, with the number of the slaves belonging to each, and the names and the length of service of the representatives of the absentees during the last ten or twenty years. The number of the non-resident planters, I will venture to say, would be found quite overwhelming. But the force of the "infinite" spoken of cannot reach across the Atlantic. And if it be argued that in the master's absence his place is supplied by attorneys and managers and overseers, then I say, that the brief and uncertain tenure by which these notoriously hold their offices, is as destructive of the theory in question as the equally notorious non-residence of the West Indian sugar planters. Lord Seaford, Mr. Bernal, Mr. Gloucester, and Mr. Blair, may be very good men, but the idea is utterly absurd of an influential attachment subsisting between them and their distant slaves, or between those slaves and their ephemeral agents.

"I have only again to express my readiness to attend your call at any time, and to assure you of the respect with which I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

"Your very faithful and obedient Servant."

RIGHT HON. R. W. HORTON.

Some farther correspondence passed between these gentlemen, which it is not necessary to give at length. In reply to enquiries from Mr. W. Horton, Mr. Macaulay informed him, that "the only publication of the Anti-Slavery Society which I recollect to have treated this question, except incidentally, is the 'Examination of the Demerara Memorial,' (Being the Anti-Slavery Reporter, No. 27.) I certainly entirely concur in the opinions promulgated in that pamphlet. But yet I cannot see how they are to be strengthened in their effect by being repeated or argued *on oath*." Again—"From the beginning to the end of that pamphlet it rests entirely on official documents obtained through the Colonial Office,"—"a source of knowledge at least as open to the servants of the crown as to myself,"—"or on works of acknowledged authority, as Humboldt, Sir Stamford Raffles, &c. And I must still think that these documents and such writers are the sources to be mainly relied upon of sound knowledge on this subject."

We have probably said enough to abate the astonishment of Mr. W. Horton, that both Mr. Buxton and Mr. Macaulay should have resisted not only his entreaties, but his taunts to induce them to violate a determination previously and deliberately adopted in concurrence with their friends, and to which, had no better reasons existed for it, they would have been necessarily driven by the Right Hon. Gentleman's own official letter of the 22nd October, 1827. It would indeed have been a subject of just astonishment, if under such circumstances, Mr. Buxton or Mr. Macaulay had taken it upon themselves to act in compliance with Mr. Horton's new and unexpected proposition, however that gentleman may have exulted in the opportunity of displaying his dexterity in their cross examination, or however they may have withered under the torture of such a process.

We have probably also said enough to satisfy the freeholders of Yorkshire that this second attempt of Mr. Horton to shake their confidence in Lord Brougham and in Lord Brougham's Anti-Slavery associates, is as misplaced and futile as we have shewn the first to be. We therefore take our leave for the present of the Right Hon. Gentleman, and turn to another part of the discussion which he has raised; and as we have been misunderstood upon it, both by friends and foes,\* we shall take this opportunity of endeavouring to obviate their misconceptions.—We mean the question of

## II.—COMPENSATION TO THE SLAVE-OWNERS.

Now it is perfectly true that we have never hesitated to admit, that the owners of slaves, in the case of their slaves being emancipated by an act of the British parliament, have a right to prefer, and, if they can, to establish, a claim to compensation; and that if they succeed in fairly establishing such a claim Parliament is bound to indemnify them.

But we have never admitted, nor indeed do we believe, that it will be in their power to establish such a claim, at least to any material extent. Still they have a right to do so if they can.

The parties who have suffered so severely by the establishment of the Liverpool and Manchester rail road,—the coachmasters, the waggoners, the bargemen, &c.,—have undoubtedly the right, if they choose, to prefer a claim to Parliament for indemnity, and if they can, to establish the justice of that claim, both by an appeal to general principles, and by an exposition of the particular facts of their case. But it would still be for Parliament to judge of the soundness of such principles as well as of the truth and tendency and relevancy of such facts; and to act accordingly in the admission, rejection, or modification of the claim that had been founded upon them.

A similar indulgence, but similarly restricted, seems fairly due to every class of claimants who may think themselves aggrieved by any measure of national policy; and we know of no reason which ought to exclude the owners of slaves from a fair and equitable consideration of their claim to indemnity from the consequences of an act of emancipation, if such an act should be passed by the imperial legislature. What the result of such an application would be is a perfectly different question, and must depend on the peculiar circumstances of the case.

Thus it was in the instance of the slave trade. The proposal to abolish it was met by petitions from the West Indians at home and abroad, to the full as strong either as that lately presented by the

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\* Among the first class, namely, our friends, we are truly glad to number the author of a Review of Mr. W. Horton's first letter to the Yorkshire freeholders, which appeared in the *Christian Instructor* of Edinburgh, for December, 1830, and which contains a very able and conclusive exposure of the many of the Right Hon. Gentleman's arguments. We recommend it to his candid attention.

Marquis of Chaudos, or that which now lies for signatures at the Jamaica Coffee-house, claiming indemnity to a very large amount. Seventy millions sterling was the lowest sum at which in 1792 the planters rated the injury about to be inflicted on them, and they insisted on having the indemnity secured before one step was taken towards abolishing the slave trade. But what was the language at that time held towards the claimants by His Majesty's government? On the 3rd of April, 1792, when the resolution was first adopted of abolishing the slave trade, Mr. Pitt, in reply to the clamourers of that day for indemnity, observed, that he was very far from meaning to exclude the question of indemnification, on the supposition of possible disadvantages affecting the West Indians through the abolition of the slave trade. "But when gentlemen," he added, "set up a claim of compensation merely on general allegations, which is all I have yet heard, I can only answer, let them produce their case, and if, upon any reasonable grounds, it shall claim consideration, it will then be the time for parliament to decide upon it."

Again in 1807, when a bill for abolishing the slave trade had already passed the House of Lords, and was actually brought into the House of Commons by Earl Grey, then Lord Howick, the West Indians came forward as now to claim compensation. Utter ruin to all their interests—the total loss of their income and their property—they said, would be the inevitable consequences of the measure. Not only would there be insurrection and massacre throughout the whole of our slave colonies (the very language now employed to frighten the public out of their wits) but indemnity would be required to the extent of at least one hundred millions.\* They requested to be heard by counsel, and counsel were heard at the bar of the House of Commons, as they

\* It is highly instructive to look back to the debates of 1791 and 1792, and of 1806 and 1807, and to observe how the very same topics of alarm and intimidation, on the ground whether of apprehended insurrection, or of the enormity of the requisite indemnity, were then called into action which form the weapons of West Indian controversy at the present hour. They were the arguments or rather the bug-bears employed at that time to terrify Parliament from performing a great act of national justice. And they are now again resorted to for the same purpose, and we trust with a like issue as on the latter occasion. Would any one now believe that in 1807, it was possible that such men as Lord Eldon, Lord Sidmouth, Lord Liverpool, &c. in the House of Lords, and Lord Castlereagh, and Mr. Windham, in the House of Commons, should have been so far deluded by such representations as gravely to adopt them, and to unite in sounding the loudest notes of alarm throughout the land. Mr. Windham went even so far as to say, "As those who support the bill are anxious to wash their hands of the guilt of the slave trade, so I am equally anxious to wash my hands of the dreadful consequences which that abolition threatens to produce." Can any thing appear more absurd in the retrospect than such language! And yet it is the very same language (senseless language we hesitate not to call it);—which is at this very moment, producing among our senators and statesmen, the same unfounded alarms from servile insurrection, and from the overwhelming pecuniary sacrifices to which we shall be exposed, in order to deter them from an act of at least equal justice. Sir R. Peel has recently raised the claim to 140 millions, doubling that of 1792!!



had also been at the House of Lords, in support of their extravagant claims; and their cause was ably pleaded by Mr. Dallas, the late Chief Justice, Mr. Alexander, the late Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and Mr. Scarlett, the late Attorney-General, now Sir James Scarlett. But what on that occasion was the language of Viscount Howick? It was to this effect: He did not deny that the apprehended loss which this measure might eventually cause might become a fair question of future consideration.—Let those who may conceive themselves entitled to demand compensation submit their case to the House, and if that case should be established, the House would never be backward in listening to the claims of justice: He stated this as a general principle. The West Indians, however, were not satisfied with this assurance, and Mr. Manning, in giving notice that he should proceed to move for a Committee to consider of the compensation to be granted, in the event of the Bill passing, to those whose interests would be affected by it, begged to know from Lord Howick, whether His Majesty's ministers were authorised to assent to such a proceeding. Lord Howick's reply was, that it was contrary to the practice of Parliament to declare *beforehand* what might be the amount of compensation to be granted for possible losses by any general measures of political regulation or national policy which Parliament might adopt, and that therefore he was not authorised to consent to such a Committee. The bill accordingly passed without any express provision being made, beyond this general verbal assurance, for compensating the eventual sufferers. The doors of Parliament however were left completely open to their representations. And what has been the result? To this hour, after a lapse of twenty-four years, not only has not a single claim for compensation been established by any one of those then noisy claimants; but not one has even been preferred. And yet the West Indians were quite as loud in their clamours, and quite as confident in their statements in 1792 and 1807, as they now are in 1831.

Now if the misrepresentations and exaggerations employed on that occasion, must be admitted to have been very gross, and without any real foundation, and chiefly for the purpose of delaying an act of justice; is it not just barely possible, that as the complaining and opposing parties are the same, and their motives the same, and their end the same, the fears and alarms they are at this time exciting, both as to the danger of insurrection, and as to the extent of pecuniary sacrifice to which the country must necessarily be subjected, may be as vain and as valueless as those of 1807. We are confident they will be found to be so; and that the attempted delusions of the former period are only now renewed in the hope, which, we trust, will prove a vain one, of a more successful result.

Let it not be supposed, however, that we mean to retract any thing we have said, as to the right of the owners of slaves to prefer, and if they can, to establish their claim to compensation. We admit that right, as we have always done, in the most explicit manner. But still we say with Mr. Pitt, and with Earl Grey, that the time for indemnity

is not yet come, and that it can only be given when injury shall be proved to have been sustained.

In the case of the abolition of the Slave-trade, that measure of national policy, which the planters alleged would ruin them, and for which they demanded compensation, has proved, by their own admission, an advantage instead of an injury. They have not only incurred no loss, but they have been gainers by the measure. Now surely to have awarded, on the mere allegation of a set of claimants, compensation *beforehand* in such a case, would have been a somewhat preposterous proceeding. The general assurance that if loss were actually incurred by the operation of the measure, it would be fairly and equitably considered and liberally indemnified, was all that could be reasonably demanded; and it was, therefore, all which, in the wisdom of Government and Parliament, it was thought necessary at that time to concede.

But it is argued that the two cases of the Slave Trade and Slavery differ very widely, and are, therefore, not to be dealt with on the same principles.

They agree, however, in some very material respects.

Both the cases are cases of national crime of a very deep dye, and which ought in justice to be put down at whatever cost. The allegations of danger and loss too are precisely of the same nature; they are supported by the same facts and arguments; and they are put forward by the very same parties, in the one case as in the other.

Are these allegations entitled to more respect in 1831 than they received in 1807, when they were proved to be vain and fallacious? It is admitted that in the former case the planters were wholly mistaken in their representations not only as to insurrection but as to pecuniary loss. Is it clear that they may not be equally mistaken now?

In the former case, the planters possessed every advantage of local knowledge to which they can now pretend, and they were alike interested in the result. They were nevertheless altogether wrong in their anticipations of evil. Is it not very possible, nay, is it not very probable, that they may be wrong also in their present anticipations of similar evil?

On the former occasion, the abolitionists affirmed that no evil, but much good, would result to the planters from the measure they advocated. The planters gave them no credit for this assurance. On the contrary they reviled them as guilty of fraud and hypocrisy, of robbery and injustice. Nay, they charged them even with cruelty and inhumanity in disregarding the misery which their rash and ill-advised schemes of pseudo-philanthropy must necessarily produce.

On the present occasion, the same parties stand in nearly the same relations to each other. The abolitionists now affirm that not only the negroes, but the planters also will derive benefit from the conversion of slaves into free labourers. The planters revile them for daring to say so; and reiterate, in terms no less unmeasured, their former vituperations. But in this case as in the former, may not the abolitionists be right and the planters wrong? May it not prove true that

free labour will be more advantageous to the owner of the slave than slave labour? If so, how would the claim of compensation stand? Could it in that case be sustained for a single moment?

Is it not the part then both of justice and of common sense to say in this, as in the former case—We do not deny the right of the planters to prefer and to establish their claim to be compensated for any injury they may sustain from the great measure of national justice and policy of converting the slaves into free labourers; we only maintain, as in the case of the Slave Trade, that the injury should first be made to appear, should be stated and proved, and that then it should be considered fairly and equitably; assured that Parliament in that case will not be deaf to the claims of justice?

We are not aware of a single argument which can be adduced, in opposition to this course of proceeding in the present case, which ought not to have availed in the case of the abolition of the Slave Trade, which the Planters declared with equal solemnity would infallibly fill the Colonies with blood, would instantly change the tenure of their estates from a fee simple into a life rent, and by rendering all their other possessions, lands, houses, &c. nearly valueless, would involve them in utter ruin.

If, however, the abolition of slavery by law should end, on the contrary, in improving the income and the property of the Colonial landowner, instead of deteriorating them; no one will refuse to admit that while the Planter would retain, in its integrity, his right to apply for and obtain indemnity for any injury consequent upon that measure, he would, in the case we are assuming, not only not have his claim for compensation allowed, but he would not even think of preferring it. He had a sufficient sense of justice and propriety, in the former case, to forbear from urging a claim which he felt to be groundless; and so doubtless would he find himself constrained to act in the parallel case we are now supposing.

If it should turn out, contrary to all the Planters' forebodings, and in agreement, as in the former case, with the predictions of the abolitionists, that no harm shall have arisen to him from the dreaded change, but rather good; then the consideration of the question of compensation, (beyond the assertion of the general principle of the right of indemnity for losses incurred, for which we contend as strenuously as the Planters themselves,) would not only be premature but preposterous.

If, for example, the effect should be that by substituting wages for the cartwhip; the ordinary incentives to industry for brute coercion; the restraints of legal authority and of a well regulated police for those of the unlimited arbitrary power, and varying and unreasonable caprice of individual despotism; the slave were rendered happier, and the income of the master larger as well as more stable, who would or could think of demanding compensation?

And if the master, driven by this measure to change his whole system, were to find himself forced on improvements which he cannot but admit would be beneficial to him;—if he should be obliged to become resident, and thus be spared the ruinous effects of distant

agency, and the no less ruinous effects of the unfaithfulness and disobedience of distant agents;—if the cattle plough,\* now almost wholly unknown in the slave colonies, were brought into general use, and made to take the place, in tilling the soil, of the wretched hoe in the feeble hands of men and women; and proper machinery were also employed in other branches of colonial husbandry;—if a change of crops, and a better system of manuring and of general management were adopted; so that the soil which, by a kind of judicial blight, never fails gradually to deteriorate and even to wear out under slave culture should thus gradually improve;—if the female part of the population, instead of that constant and oppressive drudgery which now smites them with the curse of barrenness and abridges their lives, thus relieved, were to become like the females of Mexico and Hayti, of the maroons in Jamaica, and of the free coloured classes in all the colonies, the mothers of swarming families;—if the labouring population should thus, instead of wasting away as at present from year to year, rapidly increase, and the land, as population multiplied, should proportionably rise in its value, and become a source of growing profit to its proprietor;—who shall say, that if such anticipations were realized any compensation would be claimable for the extinction of Slavery? And why may they not be realized? It is in the power of the Planters to realize them. But they will not. They are withheld, we speak of the resident Planters, by their passions, and their prejudices, and their pride, and their indolence, and their inveterate attachment to the habits of a corrupting despotism, and still more by other circumstances to which we shall hereafter advert. Therefore they will not. But Parliament must do it for them; must impose upon them the necessity of pursuing their own unquestionable advantage, no less than that of their slaves; and must tell them, in language which can neither be misunderstood nor resisted, that the present ruinous system, ruinous alike to the master and to the slave, must cease; and that they must be compelled by law to pursue a course, which while it will benefit them, will also rescue from bondage, and misery, and death 800,000 of our fellow subjects, now bending beneath their intolerable and unprofitable yoke.

But even supposing that all these anticipations should prove as visionary as we believe them to be just, still we should say to the Planters, You preserve entire your right to indemnity; you have, from the British parliament and the British people, the assurance that, if the measure which they feel it their duty to adopt shall produce the evils you apprehend, not through your own perverse and contumacious resistance or misconduct, but through the natural operation of the policy that has been pursued, you shall be indemnified.

We are aware that it may be alleged, and indeed has been charged upon us, by our powerful coadjutor in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, that we have been far too complaisant to the colonists on this point. In the year 1823 we proposed, it is true, to the Government, a plan for redeeming the future children of slaves, and also another for re-

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\* No people pretending to civilization have ever generally excluded the plough from cultivation except the Colonial Slaveholders.

deeming all female slaves from bondage, at even a high estimate of their value. These plans, however, must not be considered as implying that we then took a different view of the principles which govern this question from what we now take. But we were willing then to waive the question of the planter's right to such a payment as was proposed, for the sake of a compromise which, while it granted immediate freedom to one half of the slaves, would put a certain and definite term to slavery itself. Considering all the fearful hazards of the case, committed, unhappily, as the work of reformation had been to the planters, by the Government and the Parliament, we were then prepared to accede to such a compromise; and should have deemed it a cheap purchase for the certainty of the final termination, in twenty or thirty years, of that system of cruelty and injustice, of suffering and of guilt, which we had united to abolish. The case is altered. The nation is now much more awake to its obligations than it was then; and if Parliament be not equally awake to them, we feel confident that it will become so. Supported by the voice of the country, and appealing to the eternal and immutable principles of right and wrong, we call upon our rulers and representatives for justice, bare justice, in behalf of 800,000 of our fellow men and fellow subjects. This demand may be denied to us for a time, but it cannot be long withheld. As surely as the slave trade has been abolished, and as surely as the fetters of religious liberty have been broken, so surely will slavery also be abolished; and every day which delays it unnecessarily, while it increases the chances of those servile convulsions which are idly and ignorantly dreaded as likely rather to result from emancipation, will only serve to swell the ranks, and increase the zeal, and stimulate the exertions of those who, regarding their cause as the cause of God and of their country, as the cause of religion and justice and humanity, as well as of the soundest policy, will feel it to be a binding obligation upon them to press forward, in the face of every obstacle, to its final triumph.

Even in that case, however, we shall be told, that as all our expectations may not be realized, we may be called to redeem our pledge of indemnity, and we must therefore be prepared to meet its cost;—we must be prepared to pay, for the emancipation which we demand, a full compensation to the owners of slaves for the human chattels of which it will deprive them, and which our laws, it is alleged, have authorized them to purchase and to hold as property. Be it so: we are content to take this merely commercial view of the subject, and calmly to enquire into the truth of all those exaggerated statements of the market value of this property, by which the colonists attempt to frighten both Parliament and people out of the exercise of their humanity and their justice.

As for the alleged danger of insurrection, if there be truth in history, in history uncontradicted by any opposing facts, we have already disposed of it in a former Reporter (No. 70), to which we shall have much more to add, should it be required. We shall now confine our view to the simple question of the money which the nation must sacrifice, if, on a full view of all the circumstances of this complicated case, the

planters should establish their title to be paid the full market value of every slave they now possess.

In the year 1823, a very intelligent planter of Jamaica, Mr. Foster-Barham, the possessor himself at that time of about 765 slaves, since reduced to about 730, published a calm, and on the whole, a temperate pamphlet on this subject, in which he endeavoured to impress his brother planters with the necessity of an early compromise of their claims, feeling, as he did, a firm conviction that slavery could not long outlive the growing force of public opinion. He seems to have taken great pains to ascertain what was at that time the average income arising to the slave proprietary from the labour of their slaves, and he fixed it at the rate of three pounds per annum for each slave, young and old, strong and feeble, male and female. According to the estimate therefore of this acute and interested witness, the net return on the capital invested in our slave colonies, whether in slaves, in the land tilled by those slaves, or in the buildings and other materials required for the purposes of culture and manufacture, might be fairly reckoned at a rate not exceeding three pounds sterling for each slave.

Taking the number of slaves in all our slave colonies, including the Cape of Good Hope and the Mauritius, to be 800,000, this would make the net annual income of the whole of the slave proprietary, to be £2,400,000.

Considering the interest which the author of this estimate obviously had in raising it as high as his upright mind would allow him to do, we may fairly assume that, if closely investigated, it would be found to be above the truth rather than below it. It is notorious also, that since 1823, the price of almost every article of colonial produce has materially declined. We seem warranted therefore in reducing his estimate, and in taking, instead of his three pounds, only two pounds ten shillings for each slave, which would leave for the annual aggregate of income the sum of two millions sterling. This sum, however, being derived from colonial possessions, where (putting out of view, distance, and insecurity, and other drawbacks) interest is never lower than six per cent. cannot be regarded, in order to be realized in this country, as worth more than fifteen years purchase, or thirty millions sterling. Now even if the whole of this sum were to be converted at par into a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. stock, as an indemnity fund, the annual dividend payable upon it would not exceed £1,050,000 a year. But in fact it would be only that portion of the whole which was derived from the slaves, (exclusive of the land, houses, &c. which would still remain in the possession and usufruct of their proprietors,) that would require to be thus indemnified, and this could not exceed one-half of the whole sum, or £525,000 a year. And it would be very extraordinary, if with the command of that abundance of free labour which would be the effect of emancipation, and with the increased demand for land which the altered circumstances of the mass of the community must create, the planter were not, by such a payment, amply indemnified for all and for much more than all he had been deprived of by the conversion of his slaves into free labourers.

But even such an indemnity may not satisfy the slave-owners. We

must be paid, they may say, the market value of all our slaves. Again we reply, be it so; and then we enquire, what, even on that principle, would be the probable extent of the compensation? We have carefully examined every official document containing data on which to fix the average market value of slaves, young and old, male and female, robust and feeble, healthy and diseased, skilled and unskilled, in the various British slave colonies belonging to the Crown; and we do not hesitate to pronounce it on an average of the last fifteen or twenty years, to be considerably below £30 sterling a head. At present it is probably much less, and is certainly, under all the circumstances of the case, not likely to increase. Now if we take the average market value of slaves to be even as high as £30 each, the aggregate amount of the value of the whole 800,000 would not exceed £24,000,000; a sum, which converted at par into a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. stock, would require an annual dividend of exactly £840,000.

But how, it may be asked, is this country, already overburdened with taxation, to pay £840,000, or even £525,000 a year? We reply, that even the larger sum is not more than two thirds, and the smaller sum not more than one half, of what it now costs us in bounties and protecting duties to bolster up this criminal and profitless system. And that too is independent of all the evils resulting from this ruinous monopoly in checking our commercial intercourse with the British dominions in the East, with China and the Indian Archipelago; and in short with the whole of the tropical world besides. It is independent also of the cost of the naval and military expenditure of British life and British treasure which is required to enforce, at the bayonet's point, the despotism of the slave-holder. And it is moreover independent of all the demoralizing influences on our population at home and abroad, and especially on the master and the slave; and of all the load of conscious guilt, and the awful consequences of that consciousness, which the continued toleration of this profligate and noxious system entails upon us.\*

But supposing that the slave-owners should set at nought the considerations we have placed before them; and that, through their influence, Parliament should be induced still to hesitate in fulfilling the just expectations of the country, by putting an early period to the evils of slavery; and that actuated either by a groundless dread of insurrection, or by a reluctance to pay the price which may attend the consummation of this unquestionable act of justice, they should turn a deaf ear to the prayers of their constituents; still there will remain a variety of minor measures which the Government may see it right immediately to adopt, and for which no shadow of claim to indemnity can, on any pretence whatever, be pleaded by the slave-owners. To a few, and only a few, of these we will now briefly advert; and our remarks may tend both to throw some further light on this painful subject, and to impress still more deeply, on the public, the innate, and

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\* Besides all its other evils, it may be considered as little better than a mere system of mendicancy on a large scale. See the paper entitled the Case of the West India Planters, inserted in the Supplement to the Anti-Slavery Reporter, No. 61, p. 272.

measurable iniquity of the slave system, and the duty, if delay should unhappily intervene, of redoubling their exertions for its early and final extinction.

1. One of the first of these measures should certainly be the abolition of all fiscal regulations for the encouragement of slave-grown produce, in preference to that which is the produce of free labour. It can hardly be that *these* should survive even the present session; or that the distress of our own population and the claims of our Asiatic fellow-subjects, (to say nothing of their effect in deteriorating the condition of the colonial slave, and in protracting and imbittering his bondage) should not secure the equalization of the duties on East India and West India products, and should not also put an end to the mode of calculating the drawback on refined sugar, exported from this country, and which has the effect of greatly raising its price to the British consumer. The tax thus laid upon him for the benefit of the sugar grower is not less, we are assured, than about five pounds per ton on all sugars consumed in this country or exported in a refined state, independently of the operation of the protecting duty by which slave-grown sugar is defended against the competition of free-grown sugar. The bounty alone, therefore, forms a tax on the country, which goes into the pockets of the sugar planter, little if at all less than £1,000,000 a-year.\* Here there can be no shadow of pretence for compensation.

2. Lord Bathurst, and all the Colonial Secretaries of State who have succeeded him, and especially Sir G. Murray, have concurred with Mr. Canning in maintaining that the slave is entitled to the full and unbroken enjoyment of the sabbath, "wholly clear from the demands of the master and the necessities of the slave;"—a principle which can only be carried into effect by allowing him an entire day in lieu of the sabbath, to be applied to the same purposes for which the sabbath has been, and still is, desecrated by the planters, in open violation of the authority not only of the Divine law, but of the law of the land. In no colony, no not even in any one of the crown colonies, has this principle been carried into effect, though its justice has been, over and over again asserted by the government, and pressed by them on the attention of the Colonists. The slaves therefore are still denied the rest of the sabbath, which is still devoted, in common with the other six days, to the service, not of their heavenly but of their earthly master. They must still work on that day or starve.

What can have caused the perpetration of this enormous abuse? Can it be that the Colonial Committee have adopted the views of the Trinidad Council, in their minute of the 9th of July, 1823, that if the Sunday is wholly given up to the slave, and another day substituted for the secular uses to which Sunday has hitherto been applied, they will expect "full compensation for the loss of the additional day?" (See papers by command for 1824, p. 105.) We can conceive no other reason which can have led Lord Bathurst and his successors in

\* We are aware that this statement is questioned. We refer our readers to the elucidation of it to the Reports Nos. 17, 22, 24, and 57. Prior to its truth has often been offered and is still ready to be produced before a committee.



office to have failed in their pledges, and to have violated their own often avowed principles, on this subject. But will Parliament listen to such a plea as this, a plea as profligate, as the practice which it has been so long and so vainly sought to reform, is cruel and unjust? It cannot be. They can hardly fail to put down as by acclamation so outrageous an abuse.

3. The main pretence set up by the colonists for refusing the just demand of freedom for the slaves, is that they must be previously instructed and imbued with a sense of moral and religious obligation. And yet no one law has yet been passed in any colony, not even in the Crown colonies, for securing to the slave time for such instruction. Will Parliament tolerate any longer this insincere pretence? Or will they be desirous to mete out to the planter a measure of compensation for every hour granted for such a purpose; although the planters have taken pains to delude Parliament and the public into a belief that they do actually allow time and means for instruction. In Jamaica a law to that effect, without a single executory provision, or a single sanction to enforce it, has stood on the statute book of that island a dead letter for nearly 140 years. Will Parliament refuse now to supply the provisions and sanctions necessary to give effect to such a law?

4. Such colonial legislatures as have chosen at all to regulate the allowance of food to the adult field slave, have assigned to him a portion so scanty as to be wholly inadequate to his sustentation; the maximum of which, in Tobago, is at the rate of ten pints of wheat flour weekly (see No. 73, p. 12), and in the five Leeward Islands, eight pints of the same flour weekly (see No. 38, p. 271); while the prison allowance of Jamaica, the allowance to men not working in the field but confined in prison, is twenty-one pints of the same flour weekly. Now if Parliament, regulating itself even by the prison allowance of Jamaica, which cannot be presumed to be at all excessive, were to enact that every adult slave should be allowed at the rate of twenty-one pints of wheat flour weekly, the cost of feeding their slaves in the colonies we have mentioned, and perhaps in all of them, would be at once more than doubled. And yet would not this be right? Would it not be a provision of the commonest humanity and justice which ought never to have been left by the masters to be enjoined by an act of Parliament? But are the planters to claim compensation, if they should be compelled to double their scanty allowances, and adequately to feed the slaves whose labour they are exacting? Or do they not rather deserve reprehension and punishment for their past treatment of the King's lieges, than compensation for ceasing to starve them? And yet we should not be surprised by such a demand, not more surprised at least than by the demand of the Council of Trinidad, to be indemnified for granting to the slave the Sabbath which God had given him, but which they had iniquitously wrested from him and applied to their own purposes.

5. It will be seen by the same work of Mr. Stephen (chap. iv. v. and vi.), that the planters had stated, in their evidence before the Privy

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\* See this whole subject discussed with the clearness of demonstration in Mr. Stephen's 2d vol. chap. viii.

Council and the House of Commons, that the daily labour of the slaves did not extend to more than eight or nine or ten hours a-day. This was done with the obvious intention of leading the public to believe that their labour was not excessive, but moderate. Mr. Stephen, however, has proved, by unquestionable colonial testimony, (testimony confirmed by the very laws of the colonies), that their labour extends to fourteen, fifteen, and even, for a great part of the year, to eighteen, and on an average of the whole year, to sixteen hours a-day; thus at once explaining satisfactorily the causes of the barrenness of the female slaves, and the general waste of negro life, in our slave colonies. Now suppose that Parliament, adopting the evidence of the planters, not indeed as true, but as a fair statement of the number of hours which men are capable of labouring in the field, under a tropical sun, were to enact that in future, under severe penalties, it should not exceed that amount of exaction; in short, that nine hours of the twenty-four should be the maximum of the continuity of the field-slave's labour, whether in the field or out of it; what would be the effect of such an enactment on the gains of the planter? If this just provision, admitted to be so not only by numerous planters, but by public bodies in the West Indies, were adopted, what, we say, would be its effect on the gains of the master? And if this were deemed only an act of justice to the slave, which masters were bound, even by their own shewing, always to have granted to him, would they think themselves entitled to claim from Parliament indemnity for this abridgement of six or seven hours a-day of the slave's toil? Or if they did, would Parliament listen to the claim?

We will not now dwell longer on these points, but only remind the public, that if the slave owners are already reduced, by their own admissions, to a state of extreme distress, and are forced to come to Parliament, with pressing calls for prompt and effectual relief, in order to avert their absolute ruin; what will be their state, and what will be the income for which they shall have to claim compensation, when, instead of being sustained by bounties and protecting duties to the extent of about half of their present estimated net revenue, they shall be deprived, as they must soon be, of such an unnatural and injurious support;—when, instead of exacting, in fact, seven days' labour from the slave, they shall be forced to be content with five, and each of these five abridged of seven hours of their present oppressive length;—when they shall also have to add the requisite time for the instruction of the slaves;—and when, moreover, the rate of their sustentation must be more than doubled, at least in any of the colonies from which we have received correct information on the subject;—what, we repeat, will then be the income for which they shall be entitled to claim compensation at the hands of Parliament and the public? Will it amount to a single farthing per annum? We trow not. And even Mr. Wilmot Horton fully admits that no compensation can be justly claimed for mere ameliorations.

We have much more in reserve on this subject which we may take an early opportunity of adding. In the mean time we beg to refer our readers to the letter of a correspondent, on this very subject of Compensation, in our 2nd Vol. No. 42, p. 329, and more especially to

the exposure, in Mr. Stephen's recent Volume, of the delusions practised on the public by the Colonists on this subject.

Now, under these circumstances, what ought the Planters to do,—not to meet our wishes and those of the country, (that we have hardly a right to press upon them as a motive,) but to save themselves from impending ruin? They ought, we reply, to agree at once to emancipate their slaves. We verily believe that this is the only remedy which is within their reach; and we verily believe that it would prove an effectual one. Let them weigh this suggestion dispassionately without listening to the prejudices either of their managers or their consignees, and we can hardly doubt that an enlightened sense of their own interests will lead them to coincide in this conviction.

But we have perhaps done injustice to the planters, in addressing our observations exclusively to them. The great and efficient though less obtrusive parties, in the delusions practised and the clamours raised on this subject, are not the planters, but the consignees and mortgagees of their produce—the merchants of London, Liverpool, Bristol and Glasgow—who, while they have themselves been aggravating the distress of the planters, and thriving on their spoil, have been urging them to raise high the cry of poverty, and the demand of further eleemosynary aid, as well as to urge vehemently their unqualified claims for compensation. In this way, whatever the planters' fate may be, the merchants at least will continue to gain by the protraction of the present system. The net proceeds of their estates reverting to the planters, may be reduced lower and lower. Still the merchants will have their interest at 6 per cent. and their commissions, double commissions, and their high freights, and their other advantages, which may be enriching them while the planters starve. In other lines of trade, the consignee is content with his commission on the sale price of the article consigned to him, exclusive of the duty charged upon it by the Government. In the West India trade the unusual course is pursued of charging commission not only on the sale price of the article but on that price with the duty super-added. Suppose a cwt. of sugar to be worth 24s. If sold like other goods the purchaser would pay the duty, and the merchant's commission of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. would be charged only on the sale price. But this will not content the West India merchant. He claims a right to pay the duty upon it, which is 24s. more, and he therefore charges his commission, not on 24s. but on 48s. And this course is pursued even with respect to sugar refined for exportation, instead of pursuing the simple and obvious course of refining it in bond. But this would be incompatible both with the double commission of the merchant, and with the further advantage arising from the mystery in which this unusual mode of proceeding involves the matter of drawback, and hides from the public view the large bounty which is thus secured to the sugar grower.

The consignees, in this way, acquire, on the one hand, enormous gains from their dependent borrowers, the planters; while, on the other, by the mystifying process of the refining for exportation to which we have alluded, they aid the planter to obtain from the

public the means of paying them. They are therefore in truth the great opponents of reform; and what is more, almost the only parties who have any real interest in opposing it. But the planters are in their power, and must move and act at their bidding.

Now with respect to this class of persons, who, as we have said, are really the persons who would chiefly suffer by the desired and contemplated change of system, what claims have they to compensation? We believe that they have none whatever. They have speculated, with a perfect knowledge of all the circumstances of the case, in this colonial trade, and they must be considered as standing on precisely the same footing with speculators in every other branch of commerce, and as bound to abide the result of their speculations whatever it may be. If such a claim were allowed in their case, a similar claim might be urged in the case of every improvident speculator. The uncertainty of the continuance of the slave system, and the probability that Parliament and the public would deal with it and eventually abolish it, has long been a matter of perfect notoriety. The merchant therefore who has embarked in Colonial speculations during the last thirty or forty years, has done so with a perfect knowledge of all his risks. Those risks were well known to be so great as to have become almost proverbial. Let any man read the statement already referred to, of "The Case of the West India Planters," inserted in the Supplement to the Reporter, No. 61, p. 272, giving an authentic view of their perennial distress and insolvency, from the year 1750 to the present hour. Let him also read the Reports of the Parliamentary Committees on the commercial distress of the West Indies in 1807 and 1808, proving, beyond all question, the miserably losing nature of West Indian investments; and say whether any man who should embark his property in such investments, without taking an ample guarantee against eventual loss, could have expected that he was ultimately to be indemnified, for his improvidence in not doing so, by a vote of the House of Commons? No man can believe it.

What then was the motive of merchants for embarking in West India speculation? Was it their opinion of the permanence of the slave system, or any assurance given them on that point? No; it was simply the large annual return which they stipulated to receive for their advances, and which was considered by them, justly or not, as equivalent to their risks. They have no more right, therefore, to claim indemnity for their losses, in this instance, than an Insurance Company would have a right to urge a like claim, if, after having accepted the stipulated premium, they were called upon to pay the loss against which they had insured.

The ordinary advantages accruing to the consignee from an advance of capital on a sugar estate may be estimated at from 12 to 20 per cent. per annum, including interest at 6 per cent. gains by insurance, freight, &c., and commissions on the sugar sent home and the supplies sent abroad, and in the case of sugar, as we have shewn, (by a dexterous contrivance operating largely to the public detriment) double commissions. If we suppose him to retain the consignments of such an

estate for from eight to twelve years, his capital would be replaced, and all beyond would be the bonus for the sake of which he was content to encounter the risk of loss.

But would it be just that a speculator of this description should come with a claim for indemnity in case slavery should be abolished? If his speculation has benefited him, the demand would be perfectly monstrous. If it has injured him, what claim can he have to compensation beyond the thousands of unfortunate speculators, in other lines of trade, who have been hurt by their speculations?

We believe that a very large proportion of the property now vested in the British slave colonies has been vested in them by speculators of this description, who have been proceeding in their speculations with a view chiefly to their own profit and security, rather than with any view to the permanent interests of either the planters or the slaves, and with which their own too often appear to be incompatible. In most cases it would have been obviously the interest of the proprietors of the soil to have introduced the many improvements in Colonial husbandry to which we have already adverted. But this would not have suited the merchant. His commissions both on the sugar imported and the supplies exported, would thus be abridged. Instead of 12 to 20 per cent. on his capital he must be content with 10 or 8. If the sugar crops are diminished, in order to increase the provision crops, or to promote the rearing of cattle with a view to the use of the plough, he may threaten to foreclose, and the planter has no option but to submit.

In discussing this question, however, we must not lose sight of the distinction to be taken between loss incurred by individual and it may be improvident speculators, and loss to the community. It may be true that many changes, in the highest degree beneficial to the community, may be attended with loss to individuals, as in the case of improved machinery, rail-roads, &c. &c. and, in the present instance, by the substitution of free for slave labour, or rather the conversion of slaves into free labourers. But no man, we think, can doubt that the general interests of any community would be likely to be promoted by the conversion of a slave population, acted upon only by the impulse of the lash, and incapable therefore of rising from the level almost of the brute, into a free population, accessible to the force of all the motives which ordinarily urge men to exertion. Much light may be thrown on this problem, not merely by abstract reasoning, but by the light of experience; by a consideration, that is to say, of the facts furnished by history from the time of the abolition of villanage in England to the recent abolition of slavery in Spanish America, in Ceylon, in the Malaccas, and at Bencoolen, where emancipation has been effected without wading through anarchy and blood. But we will not now re-open this subject. We have already treated it largely in the Reporter, No. 70. The result of the whole is a settled conviction, that emancipation may be effected, not only without the slightest infringement of the public peace, but with decided advantage to the real proprietors of the Colonial soil, provided they will only cordially lend themselves to the introduction of the better system which we recommend.

Before we close this long but necessary discussion, we wish briefly to advert to certain sentiments which were lately reported to be uttered, in the House of Commons, by that truly enlightened minister, Sir George Murray. We rejoiced to hear him state that it had been his effort while in office, and the ultimate end to which he looked in his Colonial labours, to effect the entire, the total, abolition of slavery; the conversion, that is to say, of the slaves into free labourers. We have no doubt that this was his honest purpose.—We understood him also to intimate that the demand of the Planters to institute a commission for further examining the nature of Slavery appeared to him wholly superfluous, and could only lead to delay. It was enough that Slavery existed, to induce a British Parliament to take the necessary measures for its extinction.—He was equally indisposed to entertain the claim for compensation, not only as being a proposition which was also calculated chiefly for the purpose of delay, but as being in his view wholly uncalled for; the gradual change which he contemplated of the slave into a free labourer affording, as he conceived, no ground for such a claim.—He objected, however, on the other hand, to any very early measure of emancipation on the ground of its danger, and of its leading to insurrection. Now it is to this part of his speech that we are anxious to call the gallant General's attention, while we entreat him to consider whether his fears be the effect of ill-founded and unexamined prejudices, or the result of a fair and candid examination of the page of history, and of the lessons of philosophy no less than those of experience. We beg him in this view carefully to peruse the Reporter, No. 70, and the authorities there cited, and then dispassionately to consider, whether the dangers which he anticipates are not much more likely to follow from a protracted discussion of this agitating subject, than from an early and authoritative decision of it in favour of freedom. May not the dangers arising from sickening delays and deferred hopes in the case of the slaves, and from continued excitement and irritation on the part of the dominant class, be far more imminent, than any dangers which could reasonably be anticipated from the communication of freedom to the slaves by the authority of the state? Any contumacious resistance of the masters to the determinations of the legislature might easily be obviated; and as for a wanton and wholly objectless insurrection on the part of the emancipated slaves,—an insurrection against the very power which had already conferred upon them the blessing of freedom—conferred upon them all which they could hope to gain by insurrection—all for the sake of which they could have any motive to commit a single act of rebellion or even of insubordination—it seems to be the very extravagance of fear to apprehend it.

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Mr. Buxton has given notice that it is his intention to move the House of Commons on Colonial Slavery on the 1st of March next.



